



Department  
for Education



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills

# **Consultation on extending access to independent careers guidance**

**Summary of consultation responses**

## Introduction

On 9 May 2012, the Department for Education published a consultation on extending the duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance down to year 8 pupils and up to 16-18 year olds in schools and colleges from September 2013.

This Government is committed to raising the participation age to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015. Continuing in education or training post-16 means young people are more likely to attain higher levels of qualifications, have increased earnings over their lifetime, enjoy better health and benefit from improved social skills. The decisions that young people make during the 16-18 phase of education are just as critical to them realising their future potential as the decisions they make pre-16. **The Government will extend access to independent and impartial careers guidance to 16-18 year olds in schools and colleges** to help young people make well informed decisions about their education, training and work options.

This Government has increased choice in the education system by creating more diverse education provision, including University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools. This means that young people may have significant decisions to make at an earlier age, including whether to move to a different institution at age 14. Access to independent and impartial careers guidance in year 8 would give young people more time to make informed choices about such a move. Additional careers work in year 8 would also benefit some young people by raising their aspirations and improving their motivation. On this basis, **the Government will extend access to independent and impartial careers guidance to year 8 pupils.**

## Consultation responses

A total of 327 responses were received.

### Extending the duty to young people aged 16-18

87% of respondents said that we should extend the new duty to secure independent, impartial careers guidance to young people aged 16-18 in schools, sixth form colleges and further education institutions. They said that careers guidance was important to support young people to make informed decisions about their futures, including the benefits of university, vocational routes, apprenticeships, work-based education and training and employment. They also said that the careers guidance to support decision making for 16-18 year olds was particularly important in the context of raising the compulsory age of participation in education or training to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015.

Those who opposed the extension of the duty (13%) said that there are insufficient resources available to support schools and colleges to deliver the extended duty. Many colleges already provide good quality, in-house careers provision through their student support services function which is, in effect, independent. In addition, accreditation to a nationally recognised standard such as the matrix standard should be sufficient for colleges to demonstrate high quality careers provision.

Concerns about the extension duplicating high quality careers provision in colleges were raised but some respondents also suggested that quality is more variable in respect of access to independent and impartial guidance on external options, higher education,

labour market information and graduate employment options. 17 year old students on one year college courses are not always clear about options for progressing to the next stage of their education or training.

### Extending the duty downwards to year 8

80% of respondents said that the Government should extend the duty downwards to year 8 pupils (age 12-13). They said that careers guidance for year 8 pupils would support them in choosing GCSE options, improve motivation, raise aspirations and encourage engagement in education. They also suggested that an extension would help to raise awareness of other locally available opportunities including University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools. The provision of careers guidance in year 8 would also extend the duty to middle schools, meaning that pupils could access careers guidance during the final year of middle school in an environment where they are well known.

Those who opposed the extension of the duty (20%) said that pupils in this year group may not be mature enough to take on board careers guidance and make choices that could affect their future options. Concerns were also raised about insufficient resources available to deliver the extended duty, which may lead to a reduction in the quality of careers guidance. Within the broad legislative framework, schools will have the flexibility to put in place the careers guidance that is most appropriate for their pupils at particular stages of their education.

## Next steps

**The Government has decided to extend the duty down to year 8 and up to 16-18 year olds in schools.** As schools are already subject to the careers duty in respect of pupils in years 9-11, this will be an extension of the school's existing careers programme. The main focus in year 8 will be work to raise aspirations and improve motivation where the school considers this will benefit individual pupils. Alongside this, all year 8 pupils should have access to information and advice about locally available opportunities such as University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools. For sixth form students, access to independent and impartial careers guidance should focus strongly on post-18 options. The best schools already provide this. There is no requirement to buy in a particular type of careers guidance and there is a good deal of discretion for schools to determine the right model for them. An updated version of the statutory guidance on careers will be published in March 2013 to support schools in implementing the extended duty from September 2013.

**The Government has decided to extend an equivalent requirement to 16-18 year olds in colleges through funding agreements.** We think it is important that this age group has access to independent and impartial careers guidance, especially to help them when they wish to consider other 16-18 options. But we want to extend the requirement to colleges in a way that recognises their status as independently constituted bodies. We will continue to consult with the further education sector as we take this work forward with a view to introducing the new requirement from September 2013.

## Overview of responses

The organisational breakdown of respondents was as follows:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Career Professionals                                | 106 |
| Other*  | 39  |
| Local Authorities                                   | 34  |
| Further Education Institutions                      | 27  |
| 11-18 School  | 21  |
| Careers Representative Group:                       | 19  |
| Charities   | 16  |
| Unions/Membership Organisations:                    | 16  |
| Academy:  | 13  |
| Parent:   | 9   |
| Sixth Form College:                                 | 8   |
| 11-16 School:                                       | 8   |
| Further Education Institution Representative Group: | 3   |
| Sixth Form College Representative Group:            | 3   |
| School Representative Group:                        | 2   |
| Governor:   | 2   |
| Student:  | 1   |
| Total:  | 327 |

*\*Those that fell under the 'other' category include individuals, consultants and researchers, representative groups not covered above and those who gave no response to the question asking them to describe themselves.*



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